

March 2012

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The Communicator

March 2012 is...

Severe Storms Awareness Month

PLANNING FOR DISASTER: "Be Aware, Be Prepared, Have a Plan!"

Be Aware:

- Know in advance your weather forecasts;
- Own a battery backup NOAA Weather Alert Radio and battery (or crank) operated AM/FM radio for local broadcasts
- Stay tuned to your local broadcasting stations;
- Discuss conditions with family members and know their location during times of known potentially threatening conditions.

Be Prepared:

- Discuss your plan with family members and neighbors;
- Review your plan periodically for necessary updates;
- Refresh your emergency kit(s);
- Drill: practice your plan with household members;
- If you own a generator, read and familiarize yourself with the owner's safety manual before ever attempting to use it.

Have a plan:

- UTILITIES: Written instructions for how to turn off electricity, gas and water if authorities advise you to do so (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn them back on);
 - SHELTER: Identify safe locations within your residence and long term shelters within your community;
 - CONTACTS: Written contact information should include; relatives, neighbors, utility companies, employers (employees) and local emergency contact telephone numbers. Advise a contact (even an out of state contact is advised) of your plan;
 - EVACUATE: Predetermine evacuation routes. Identify where you could go if told to evacuate. Choose several places . . . a friend or relative's home in another town, a motel, or local shelter;
 - Children: Make back-up plans for children in case you (or they) can't get home in an emergency;
 - Vehicles: Maintain at least a half tank of fuel in vehicles.
- Move vehicles from under trees during possible wind events.
- Keep an "Emergency Go Kit" in the vehicle;
 - Medications: prepare a list of all prescription drugs.

Make a kit:

- First aid kit and essential medications; extra eyeglasses;
- Canned food and can opener;
- At least three gallons of water per person;
- Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags;
- Battery-powered (or crank) radio, flashlight, and extra batteries;
- Waterproof matches and candles;
- Local phone book;
- Special items for infants, elderly, or disabled family members;
- Extra set of car keys.





Fireside Chat

CO...The Silent Killer

—Ed Vermillion

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is referred to as the “Silent Killer”. Since CO is colorless, colorless, and tasteless, it isn’t easily detected. As Call-Takers it is essential that you keep the possibility of CO poisoning open when dealing with vague symptoms of callers initial complaint of feeling “sick”.

CO’s specific gravity is 0.9657 (air=1) so it is slightly more buoyant and mixes easily with room air, especially if the air is heated. Proper detector placement is essential to provide early notification. According to the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the maximum CO exposure in an 8-hour period is 35 parts per million (ppm). When one considers exposure with a victim’s age and health, the potential consequences are alarming. CO poisoning is often confused with the flu-like symptoms of headache, nausea, and dizziness, so a CO exposure is easily masked.

The main campus of Jewish Hospital in downtown Louisville has the regions only hyperbaric chamber that is used for moderate to extreme CO poisoning cases with great success.

The following table describes the potential symptoms, including death, from assorted levels of CO exposure. Remember, these are general numbers only, and may differ for individuals who are exposed.

<u>CO Airborne Exposure Level (ppm)</u>	<u>Average Duration (minutes)</u>	<u>Typical Symptoms</u>
100	120–180	Slight headache
400	60–120	Frontal headache
400	150–210	Widespread headache
800	45	Dizziness, nausea, seizure
1,600	20	Headache, dizziness, nausea
1,600	60–120	Death
3,200	5–10	Headache, dizziness, nausea
3,200	60	Death
6,400	1–2	Headache, dizziness, nausea
6,400	25–30	Death
12,800	1–3	Death

Mitigating the Damage from Mistakes

-Cindra Dunaway
Lee County Sheriff's Office

As much as we strive for perfection in the public safety field, at times we will stumble and make a mistake. Some mistakes are easier to fix than others. Some mistakes we never want to think about again. Some make us laugh; some make us cry. Hope-

fully, you've never made a mistake that caused someone harm.



In the comm center, we frequently make little mistakes. You know what I'm talking about—typos, putting the wrong unit on a call or closing out a call with the wrong disposition code. If you're lucky enough, you work with telecommunicators who quietly bring the mistake to your attention without hoopla and without drawing everyone's attention to the matter. Mistakes and how we handle them can alleviate or perpetuate the "us vs. them" mentality between the field and the com-

munication center.

We need to really watch how we talk to each other. We want to foster a professional working atmosphere. You don't like it when your mistakes are broadcast all over the radio for everyone to

hear do you? Same goes for the other side of the radio. I'm sure a kindly reminder that a particular status doesn't go with a specific call type would be much more appreciated than a sarcastic tone.

No. 1. Admit fault—and as soon as you discover the error, not after you've been caught! The sooner the better. If it's something that can be fixed by you, do so as soon as possible and advise the proper personnel.

No. 2. Give your co-workers the benefit of the doubt. If the mistake is something as simple as a typo or something obvious enough that it was done in error, do we really need to call them on it in front of our peers? (How many times have we seen the letter "r" accidentally left out of the word "shirt" in the description of a suspect's clothing?) Letting

them know privately so that they can fix it and move on is much more appreciated and professional. Now if it affects location or officer safety, that's a different story, but it can also be handled professionally.

No. 3. Report potential prob-

lems to your supervisor. You want to keep them in the loop. Even if there really isn't a problem but something that "might" pop up later on in your shift, or someone else's shift.

No 4. Learn from your mistakes! If you can't learn from your mistakes, then what are we doing? Not just in public safety but in life in general. We should always strive to be and do better every day. I am of the opinion that we public safety workers are above average anyway (I'm sure you knew that already!), but there's always room for improvement. Unfortunately for us, the stakes are high. When we make mistakes, they can potentially cause bodily harm or even death. This is where our training comes in. We should take advantage of as much training as possible. You do what you train! You can never train enough. Take it seriously.

EMA/MetroSafe

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MRC-Still Needs Volunteers- Can You Help?

The Medical Reserve Corps is hosting another orientation for volunteers on Wednesday, March 21, 2012 from 1800-2100 in the Training Room at 410 S. 5th Street, EMA/MetroSafe.

To recap: The MRC is a network of volunteers that assist public health efforts during a disaster or a time of need for community assistance. These volunteers have many different talents. They may be health care professionals, social workers, public relations professionals, clergy, or anyone with an interest in helping their community.

If you, or someone you know is interested in the MRC please contact Sandy Vittitow at 502-572-3466 or e-mail her at:

Sandra.vittitow@louisvilleky.gov

This is Only a Test...

At approximately 10:07 AM Eastern Standard Time, Tuesday, March 6, 2012 the National Weather Service (NWS), partnering with Kentucky Emergency Management (KYEM), Kentucky Weather Preparedness Committee (KWPC), and Kentucky Broadcast Association (KBA) will issue a tornado warning test message. Warning sirens will sound at this time across Kentucky communities. Weather alert radios will activate and television and radio stations will broadcast the alert message. The broadcast test message will emphasize this is only a test of the alert system, as schools across the Commonwealth use this time to conduct their annual statewide tornado drill. During the test message alert, all Kentuckians, businesses, hospitals, nursing homes, and government agencies are encouraged to practice their tornado safety drill and update their emergency plan.

**Are you prepared if it's the
real thing?**

